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Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/187 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, the present report provides information on measures taken by Member States and activities undertaken within the United Nations system to address violence against women. It also contains conclusions and specific recommendations for future action.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 65/187 of 21 December 2010 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, the General Assembly urged Member States to continue to develop their national strategy and a more systematic, comprehensive, multisectoral and sustained approach, aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women, in the fields of legislation, policies, prevention, law enforcement, victim assistance and rehabilitation, data collection and analysis. It further urged States to increase their focus on prevention in laws, policies and programmes and their implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The Assembly stressed that States should ensure that all relevant officials receive proper training and that States should take all possible measures to empower women and inform them of their rights in seeking redress. It requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly, at its sixty-seventh session in 2012, a report with information provided by States and the United Nations bodies, funds and programmes and the specialized agencies on their follow-up activities, including on the assistance of the United Nations entities to States, to implement the resolution. The present report is submitted in accordance with that request. It is based on information received from Member States and United Nations entities and covers the period since the previous report (A/65/208) up to 26 June 2012.

II. Background

2. According to information in the Secretary-General's database on violence against women, as at 9 July 2012, over 160 countries had adopted legislation to criminalize and/or respond to violence against women in general or to a particular form of violence; over 140 countries had in place a national plan or strategy on violence against women or had included measures to address such violence in other national plans covering broader issues; over 120 countries had undertaken some type of prevention activities, such as awareness-raising; over 110 countries had some form of support services available for victims/survivors; and over 140 countries had undertaken some type of research and data collection.

3. Despite those efforts, violence against women remains a universal phenomenon that cuts across lines of income, class and culture.[1] Country data reveal that as many as 7 in 10 women in the world report having experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime,[2] and young women, particularly those aged 15 to 24, are more likely to be exposed to violence.[1] The most common form of violence is intimate partner violence, which can often lead to death,[3] a fact confirmed in a global study on homicide. According to the study, women are the most affected in intimate partner/family-related homicides, accounting for more than 77 per cent of all victims.[4] Violence against women has devastating effects on individuals, communities and societies, constrains the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and leads to high economic and social costs. Cost analyses of

[1] See Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *The World's Women 2010: Trends and Statistics*, 2010.

[2] UN-Women, *The Facts: Violence against Women and the Millennium Development Goals*, 2010.

[3] *Ending violence against women: From words to action: Study of the Secretary-General* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.IV.8).

[4] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Study on Homicide 2011* (Vienna, 2011).

violence against women carried out in several countries, including Australia, Canada, England and Wales, Fiji and the United States of America, with different methodologies, reveal that the annual cost of such violence varies from $1.16 billion to $32.9 billion and includes a variety of costs ranging from police, health and justice responses to victims/survivors to those related to lost productivity.[2]

III. Global legal and policy developments

4. During the period covered by the present report, United Nations intergovernmental and expert bodies continued to address violence against women. For example, at its sixty-fifth session, in 2010, the General Assembly adopted resolution 65/228 on strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women. In its resolutions 14/12 and 17/11, the Human Rights Council underlined the duty of States to exercise due diligence to prevent violence against women and girls and protect victims and urged Member States to accelerate their efforts in that regard.

5. At its ninth to thirteenth sessions, the Human Rights Council's Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, continued to make recommendations relating to violence against women in 78 of the 79 countries it considered. The Working Group recommended that States ensure the enforcement of laws, the investigation of cases, the prosecution of perpetrators and the protection of victims; address the root causes of such violence and organize educational and awareness-raising programmes; and systematically collect and analyse disaggregated data on violence against women.

6. Special rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council continuously addressed violence against women, including in their dialogue with Governments and in the context of country visits (see, for example, A/HRC/14/22/Add.1, A/HRC/17/26/Add.1 and A/HRC/16/52/Add.3). In addition, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences examined the topic of reparations to women who have been subjected to violence (see A/HRC/14/22) and the intersections among multiple forms of discrimination and violence against women (see A/HRC/17/26), and addressed gender-related killings of women (see A/HRC/20/16).

IV. Measures reported by Member States and United Nations entities

7. As at 26 June 2012, 44 Member States[5] and 19 United Nations entities[6] had responded to the Secretary-General's request for information relating to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/187. Information was provided on a range of measures taken to address violence against women, including strengthening legal frameworks, adopting dedicated policies, reinforcing prevention action; efforts to prosecute perpetrators and protect and support victims; and initiatives to enhance research and data collection.

A. International instruments, legislation and the justice system

1. International and regional instruments

8. The international legal framework obligates and guides States in the adoption of their laws to address violence against women. Member States drew attention to their adherence to a range of international instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (although with reservations by some reporting States) and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Many States indicated their adherence to relevant regional instruments, such as the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, adopted in 2011.

2. Legislation, justice system and measures to end impunity

Enactment and amendment of laws

9. Violence against women is rooted in structural inequalities between men and women, and legal frameworks to secure gender equality and protect women's human

[5] Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

[6] Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, International Labour Organization (ILO), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, and United Nations Volunteers.

rights are needed to effectively address such violence. In order to achieve this, certain States enhanced legal frameworks to promote gender equality by incorporating relevant provisions into their constitutions (Algeria, Belarus and Italy) and enacted gender equality laws (Mauritius, Mexico, the Republic of Moldova and Turkmenistan).

10. Legislation provides the foundation for a holistic and effective approach to addressing violence against women and is a prerequisite for eliminating impunity. Many States have strengthened their national legal frameworks to prevent and address violence against women. A comprehensive legal framework that not only criminalizes violence against women, but also provides for measures to prevent violence and to support and protect victims/survivors is crucial. Such legislation was adopted in several countries, including Argentina, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova and Spain. Other States enhanced the legal framework for the protection of victims by adopting laws covering, for example, compensation for damages (Portugal) and support and services for victims/survivors (Austria and Japan). Some of these laws address multiple forms of violence, while others focus on one form of violence, such as domestic violence. In several States, the elaboration and/or adoption of laws to address violence against women is under way (Belarus, Greece, Lebanon and Switzerland).

11. A number of States adopted or revised legislation to address specific forms of violence against women, such as domestic violence (Croatia, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Peru and Poland), sexual harassment (Algeria, Italy, Portugal, Togo and Tunisia), stalking (Liechtenstein and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), and female genital mutilation (Italy, Portugal and Switzerland). Some States enacted or revised legislation to protect children from violence (Monaco and Portugal) and to enhance the protection of particular groups of women, such as foreign/immigrant women, by extending their right of residence if they are victims of domestic violence (France, Liechtenstein, Portugal and Switzerland). States incorporated provisions relating to the protection of women from violence in laws on gender equality (El Salvador and Turkmenistan) and crime prevention (Belarus).

12. Member States enacted and/or amended their penal codes and/or other laws to criminalize acts of violence against women, increase fines and penalties, and expand the definitions of violence and the scope of protection. In some States, domestic violence was introduced as a criminal offence (Portugal and the Republic of Moldova), while in others, sentences and fines were increased and aggravating circumstances such as the victim's age and violence resulting in the death of the victim were introduced (Algeria, Mauritius, Peru and Portugal). In Croatia, Ireland, Mauritius and Portugal, the definition of domestic violence was broadened to include physical, sexual, psychological and other types of violence and the scope of protection extended to cover violence committed within relationships other than marriage. In Portugal and other countries, the definition of rape was broadened to include a greater range of constitutive acts, while the penal code provision that exempts perpetrators of rape from prosecution if they marry the victim was repealed in Egypt.

13. United Nations entities also supported States in adopting or improving laws that address violence against women and developed tools to guide legal reform at the national level. For instance, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) supported the development, revision and implementation of laws to address violence against women, or one of its forms, in over 20 countries in the past two years. They provided technical advice to lawmakers, contributed to national consultative processes on the reform and adoption of legislation and provided guidance on the implementation of the law. On the basis of an expert group meeting, UN-Women published a *Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women* (2010),[7] which recommends the adoption of comprehensive legislation that criminalizes all forms of violence against women and mandates measures to prevent such violence and to support and protect victims/survivors. The handbook is complemented by the *Supplement to the handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women: "Harmful Practices" against Women* (2011).[8]

Civil protection orders

14. Civil protection orders, which provide for the removal of perpetrators from a joint place of residence in cases of domestic violence, and the imposition of restrictions on the behaviour of perpetrators, can prove to be effective legal remedies for victims of violence. They are available in an increasing number of States (Estonia, France, Japan, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova and the United Kingdom), and some States, such as Italy, extend the application of such orders to cases of stalking.

Reporting and access to justice

15. Inadequate reporting of cases of violence against women continues to be a challenge and, in some instances, is associated with low education and literacy rates and lack of adequate information about victims' rights, as was highlighted by Egypt. In order to address this challenge, several States undertook initiatives to inform victims/survivors and women at risk of violence of their rights and available services, including through helplines, websites and publications, often translated into several languages (Belarus, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mauritius and Portugal). In some States, reporting of violence is mandatory for professionals who encounter cases of violence in the course of their work (Peru), while in others, criminal proceedings are initiated ex officio, for example in cases of domestic violence (Liechtenstein and Malta).

16. States also adopted measures and/or amended criminal procedure codes or related laws to protect and assist victims/survivors of violence during legal proceedings. Such measures include the availability of information to victims/survivors on the progress of their cases (Switzerland); separate spaces for victims/survivors during proceedings (Panama); protection of victims' privacy (Italy); and

[7] Available from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/handbook/Handbook%20for%20legislation%20on%20violence%20against%20women.pdf.

[8] Available from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/handbook/Supplement-to-Handbook-English.pdf.

the establishment of a special department to coordinate support for witnesses and victims throughout the judicial proceedings (Croatia).

17. States undertook measures to facilitate victims' access to justice, including the provision of legal assistance and counselling and accompanying victims during court proceedings (Argentina, Gabon, Luxembourg, Mali, Mauritius and Peru). United Nations entities, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Trust Fund and UN-Women also supported similar initiatives, including through funding non-governmental organizations to provide legal assistance; the establishment of mobile courts; and the formulation of special agreements to ensure access by indigenous women to justice.

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of laws

18. Specialized training of law enforcement officials and the judiciary and the availability of specialized police units, prosecutors and courts for cases of violence against women can contribute to more effective implementation of laws. Towards that end, States appointed specialized staff and judges within courts (Ireland and Spain) and prosecution units (Gabon); and established specialized centres for investigations (Portugal) and units within Ministries (Sudan). Specialized police units were also established in a number of countries, including Ecuador, El Salvador, Indonesia, Kenya, Mauritius and South Sudan, with the support of UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR and UN-Women.

19. Training programmes were carried out and relevant materials were developed for police, prosecutors, judges, lawyers and security forces in many countries (Algeria, Argentina, Belarus, Burundi, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Gabon, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Mali, Mauritius, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Spain, the Sudan, Sweden and Togo). United Nations entities and funds, including UNDP, UNHCR, UNODC, the United Nations Trust Fund, and UN-Women supported similar training and capacity-building programmes in over 10 countries. Such initiatives were often carried out in cooperation with civil society, including women's organizations, and included a focus on the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators, enhancing knowledge of the causes and consequences of violence against women, national legislation and international standards. In some States, specialized courses and curricula, including on international standards and national legislation addressing violence against women, are provided in law schools, judges' colleges and police academies (Algeria, Argentina, Denmark, Ecuador, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mexico and Spain). In order to introduce appropriate standards for the implementation of laws, several States issued a range of protocols, regulations and guidelines, including on investigation, prosecution, legal proceedings and cooperation among different authorities (Argentina, Denmark, Estonia, Indonesia, Mexico, Panama, Poland, Portugal and Spain).

20. Some States are in the process or have already evaluated laws and judicial procedures and reviewed their implementation, in order to identify areas of improvement (Denmark, Egypt, Luxembourg, Sweden and the United Kingdom). Specific monitoring mechanisms, often with the support of United Nations entities, were established in Argentina, El Salvador, Mexico and Spain.

21. Little information was reported, however, on the impact of enacted legislation. Despite progress made, the enforcement of legislation remains a challenge. While welcoming the adoption of laws to address violence against women in their concluding observations to States parties, human rights treaty bodies[9] also expressed concern about the lack of enforcement of legislation and the lack of measures to prevent, investigate and prosecute cases of violence against women; the underreporting of cases and the barriers that victims/survivors encounter in accessing justice; lack of legal aid; low prosecution rates and lenient sentences for perpetrators; and insufficient allocation of resources to implement legislation. They urged States parties to ensure the implementation of legislation; access to justice for all victims/survivors; proper investigation of all cases and prosecution of perpetrators; increases in specialized courts and judges; and additional training for law enforcement officials.

B. National action plans, strategies, coordination mechanisms and collaboration

22. National action plans and strategies on violence against women can provide an overarching framework and timelines for the implementation of activities addressing violence against women. States increasingly adopted dedicated policies on violence against women, often in consultation with women's rights organizations and United Nations entities, which may include measures aimed at the development of laws; supporting victims/survivors; awareness-raising and education; training and capacity-building efforts; and research and data collection. Such plans and strategies address violence against women in general (Algeria, Argentina, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Peru, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia and the United Kingdom), or a particular form of violence, such as domestic violence (Croatia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Panama and Poland), and female genital mutilation/cutting (Austria, Cameroon and the Sudan). Some States included indicators and timelines in their plans (Croatia and Portugal) and established special institutions or mechanisms to carry out monitoring and evaluation (Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Peru and Sweden), while others conducted impact assessments of earlier plans, which resulted in the development of new plans to intensify action (Denmark, Estonia and Portugal).

23. Some States incorporated targets and activities relating the elimination of violence against women in national action plans and policies on other issues such as human rights (Indonesia), gender equality (Belarus, Gabon, Japan and Spain) and the promotion of women (Burkina Faso). Other States, such as Germany and Sweden, consider the elimination of violence against women as one of their main priorities in their policies on international development cooperation, and support several programmes in many countries towards that end.

24. Owing to the multiplicity of required responses, wide-ranging institutional mechanisms were established to coordinate the implementation of national action plans and policies. States established such mechanisms to tackle violence against women in general (Argentina, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Panama and Peru) or a particular form of violence, such as domestic violence (Denmark, Germany, the Republic of Moldova and Switzerland),

[9] See http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/HumanRightsBodies.aspx.

female genital mutilation/cutting (Italy and Mali) and forced and early marriages (United Kingdom). These mechanisms often include multisectoral task forces and commissions, specialized units within Ministries or expert groups and, in many cases, they comprise representatives of both governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations. Limited information was provided, however, about the decision-making power of such mechanisms.

25. Coordination among different actors was identified as a challenge. In order to address this, several other efforts to enhance collaboration and coordination among different stakeholders were undertaken, including cooperation arrangements and agreements among different governmental authorities and the establishment of national working groups and networks (Croatia, Estonia, Indonesia, Italy, Panama, Peru and Sweden). A number of States highlighted the collaboration between the Government and civil society, in particular women's organizations (Denmark and Italy). Several reported on the allocation or increase of funds to implement national action plans, policies and programmes (Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, the Sudan and the United Kingdom).

26. United Nations entities, including OHCHR, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNODC, UNRWA and UN-Women, supported the development of national action plans and policies to address violence against women and developed tools to guide policy reforms. On the basis of an expert group meeting, UN-Women published a *Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence against Women* (2012) that presents a model framework for national action plans and sets out detailed recommendations, accompanied by explanatory commentaries and good practice examples.[10]

27. Despite efforts to enhance the implementation of plans and policies, several States identified lack of adequate resources and coordination as challenges. In addition, while human rights treaty bodies welcomed the adoption of national action plans, strategies and programmes to address violence against women, they also expressed concern that despite such efforts, there is still a high prevalence of violence against women; inadequate coordination among institutions; and a lack of adequate capacity and financial resources for the implementation of policies and programmes. They urged States parties to provide substantial human, technical and financial resources in order to effectively implement such policies.

C. Prevention measures, including awareness-raising and capacity-building

28. Prevention is recognized as a core component of any strategy to end violence against women. States identified societal attitudes and practices as challenges in preventing and addressing such violence. In order to address this, States stepped up their efforts in awareness-raising and advocacy and increasingly engaged a wide range of stakeholders, including communities, civil society organizations, religious and community leaders, the media, the private sector, young people, men and boys.

[10] Available from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/handbook-for-nap-on-vaw1.pdf.

I. Awareness-raising and promoting safety

29. Numerous countries organized national awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women (Argentina, Belarus, Ecuador, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Peru and Sweden), including on domestic violence (Croatia, France, Luxembourg and Malta), female genital mutilation (Italy) and forced and early marriages (United Kingdom). Several campaigns were carried out in connection with annual commemorations of the campaign "16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence" and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (Italy, Panama, the Republic of Moldova, the Sudan and Togo). In several States, funding was provided to non-governmental organizations to carry out awareness-raising campaigns and prevention activities (Ireland, Mexico and the United Kingdom).

30. A number of States referred to a range of other awareness-raising initiatives, often targeting particular groups of women such as migrant women, teenagers and young adults. These initiatives included community mobilization, conferences, seminars and debates aimed at raising awareness about violence against women, national laws and international human rights treaties (Algeria, Austria, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Gabon, Indonesia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan and the United Kingdom). Publications, brochures, websites, audiovisual material, television and radio spots and social media were utilized in awareness-raising programmes.

31. In order to sensitize staff and officials and strengthen their capacity to address violence against women, States organized training programmes and seminars, including on international standards, gender equality and violence against women. Such initiatives targeted government officials, traditional and religious leaders, parliamentarians and non-governmental organizations (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritius, Peru, Portugal, Switzerland and the United Kingdom).

32. During the reporting period, the United Nations led awareness-raising efforts on ending violence against women at the global, regional and national levels. Many awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives were organized under the umbrella of the Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women". UN-Women's social mobilization and advocacy platform "Say NO-UNiTE to End Violence against Women" has mobilized and obtained the signatures of Heads of States, ministers and parliamentarians from over 70 countries. Many United Nations entities, including the Department of Public Information, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), ILO, OHCHR, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, UNRWA, the United Nations Trust Fund, United Nations Volunteers and UN-Women, stepped up their efforts for advocacy and awareness-raising on violence against women. These initiatives included campaigns, international conferences, expert group meetings, seminars and training programmes, and targeted multiple stakeholders such as communities, religious leaders, young people, particular groups of women and the private sector. A wide range of communication and advocacy tools were also utilized towards this end.

33. In order to promote safe environments for women and girls, UNICEF, the United Nations Trust Fund and UN-Women conducted studies, engaged community leaders and supported programmes to improve urban planning and safety in public spaces. In addition, a five-year programme "Safe and Friendly Cities for All" was launched by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), UNICEF and UN-Women to promote safety of women and girls in public spaces.

2. Educational system and the media

34. The educational system can change sociocultural attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate violence against women. Several States highlighted their efforts to address discriminatory attitudes, raise awareness about violence against women and promote safety in schools through training teachers on gender equality and human rights (Austria, Belarus, Ecuador, Mexico, the Republic of Moldova and Spain); the development or revision of school curricula and material to eliminate gender stereotypes and promote the elimination of violence against women (Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Japan, Mexico, the Republic of Moldova and Spain); raising the awareness of students about violence against women (Denmark, Gabon, Luxembourg, Panama, Peru, Portugal and the Sudan); and national programmes to reduce violence in schools (Finland). Such United Nations entities as UNESCO, UNICEF, the United Nations Trust Fund and UN-Women also supported initiatives to raise awareness about violence against women and gender equality among students, teachers and parents.

35. In order to sensitize journalists to reporting cases of violence against women in a more gender-sensitive manner, training and sensitization activities were carried out in Belarus and Peru and, with the collaboration of UNESCO, in Mexico. In the Sudan a special agreement was drawn up between the authorities and the journalists' union with a view to enhancing their collaboration on eliminating such violence.

3. Engaging men and boys

36. The role of men and boys in addressing violence against women has been recognized as a critical component of prevention activities. States included specific measures targeting men and boys in their national policies on violence against women (for example, Estonia) and carried out initiatives to sensitize men and boys about gender equality and mobilize them to end violence against women. These initiatives included campaigns (Argentina and the Republic of Moldova) and cooperation with the White Ribbon campaign (Poland), and often focused on men from particular ethnic groups (Ecuador).

37. United Nations entities, including UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Trust Fund, United Nations Volunteers and UN-Women, continued to engage men and boys in more than 20 countries. Efforts included awareness-raising campaigns and initiatives; using sports events as a medium; training non-governmental organizations; establishing regional networks of male advocates; and developing programmes focused on building respectful relationships, including within families. Many of these activities were organized under such United Nations regional inter-agency initiatives as Partners for Prevention.

4. Programmes for perpetrators

38. In order to prevent further acts of violence, a number of States have in place intervention programmes for perpetrators of violence against women (Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Portugal and the Republic of Moldova). These programmes often include diagnosis at an early stage and follow-up monitoring of perpetrators. States reported on the allocation of funds to implement such programmes (Sweden) and the development of standards in working with perpetrators (Germany).

39. Limited information was provided concerning the sustainability and impact of the initiatives undertaken to prevent violence against women. Human rights treaty bodies continued to express their concerns about the lack of a holistic approach to the prevention and elimination of such violence and the lack of information on the impact of measures and programmes in place to reduce incidents of violence against women, and urged States to continue to carry out awareness-raising and educational programmes.

D. Protection, support and services for victims and survivors

40. Victims/survivors require timely access to integrated and coordinated services that respond to short-term injuries, protect them from further violence, provide them with support, including legal advice, counselling and access to safe shelters, and address such long-term needs as finding accommodation and employment.

1. Services and referral mechanisms

41. Support services are increasingly, but not universally, available. One promising practice is the provision of such services in an integrated and coordinated manner in one location (Ecuador, Finland, Indonesia, Mexico, Poland, Portugal and the United Kingdom). Recognizing that civil society organizations, in particular women's non-governmental organizations, have significant experience and expertise in providing services to victims/survivors of violence, a number of States supported and financed their work (Ireland, Portugal, Qatar and the United Kingdom). Referral mechanisms linking relevant sectors were established in several States (Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and Mauritius). Other developments in service provision include psychological, social and financial assistance (Luxembourg, Mauritius and Spain); assistance in finding employment (Algeria, France and Mauritius); income-generating activities (Burkina Faso, Mali, Panama, the Sudan and Togo); and vocational training (Croatia and France). Some States conducted assessments of such services in order to improve the quality (Poland, Portugal and Sweden). Many support services are, however, available only in central locations.

42. United Nations entities, including UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNRWA, the United Nations Trust Fund and UN-Women supported national efforts in over 45 countries and territories to develop integrated care models and referral mechanisms and improve access by survivors to services, including survivors from conflict and post-conflict countries, women from ethnic minorities and women living with HIV/AIDS. UNFPA continued to address the health needs of women victims of violence in over 25 countries and supported health services provision to refugees, including the distribution of medical kits in camps to prevent exposure to diseases and HIV/AIDS following sexual assault.

2. Shelters and hotlines

43. Shelters and safe houses are more widely available for victims/survivors of different forms of violence and their children, as well as for different groups of victims/survivors such as women with disabilities, women migrants, indigenous women and children victims/witnesses of violence (Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom).

44. National hotlines or helplines that provide information, often in several languages, counselling, support and referral services for victims/survivors of violence are in place in a growing number of countries (Denmark, Egypt, Finland, Gabon, Greece, Italy, Mauritius, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and the Sudan).

3. Capacity-building and guidelines for service provision

45. In order to strengthen the capacity of professionals, including medical and health staff dealing with cases of violence against women, several countries implemented training programmes and produced relevant material (Algeria, Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Malta, Peru, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Spain and the United Kingdom). Similar training initiatives focused on the needs of different groups of women, such as indigenous women, and the exchange of good practices were carried out by United Nations entities, including PAHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNHCR, in numerous countries. In order to ensure better and more consistent services to women victims of violence, States developed standard operating procedures and minimum standards of service provision, guidelines and tools for case management, and issued protocols and regulations (Argentina, Austria, Croatia, Finland, Greece, Indonesia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Panama, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Spain and the United Kingdom).

46. States identified several challenges in providing support services to victims/survivors, including lack of sufficient human and financial resources. In their concluding observations to States parties, human rights treaty bodies reiterated their concerns about inadequate support services to victims; lack of coordination among the actors involved; lack of sustained funding and uneven quality of services provision; and the obstacles encountered by victims in accessing such services. They urged States to provide support services that are geographically distributed and adequately resourced and to ensure that all women victims of violence, including women from rural areas and vulnerable groups, have full access to these services.

E. Research, data collection and analysis

47. States collected statistical information on violence against women through surveys and administrative statistics to improve their knowledge about such violence, its causes and consequences.

1. Data collection through surveys

48. Several States collected data through dedicated surveys on violence against women, some of them on a regular basis, and with the support of United Nations

entities, in relation to the prevalence, types, causes and consequences of such violence (Algeria, Italy, Japan and Sweden). Some surveys focused on particular groups, such as women with disabilities. Certain States collected data on violence against women through other types of surveys, such as national demographic health surveys and crime surveys (Philippines, Switzerland and the United Kingdom). Data collected through surveys indicated that domestic violence is the most prevalent form of violence against women in Algeria and that 31.9 per cent of women in Italy and 6 out of 10 women in Ecuador had been victims of violence at least once in their lives.

2. Administrative statistics and enhanced national capacity

49. Administrative statistics on, for example, the number of cases reported to police and charges laid or the number of admissions to hospitals or shelters for victims/survivors of violence also provide a source of information on the prevalence and severity of violence against women. Several States reported on measures taken to enhance the collection and analysis of administrative data by police, prosecutors and other relevant authorities (Algeria, Argentina, Croatia, Estonia and Peru). A promising trend in the collection of administrative data was the creation of national databases or central data systems and the development of methodologies for uniform data collection (Belarus, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Portugal and the Republic of Moldova).

50. In a number of countries, mechanisms were established to strengthen national capacity to collect statistical information on violence against women. Such mechanisms include observatories or special institutions and committees that are responsible for collecting and analysing data and information on violence against women to identify gaps and propose new policies (Argentina, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Mexico, Panama and Spain).

51. United Nations entities, including ESCWA, PAHO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, the United Nations Trust Fund and UN-Women, supported the collection of statistical information and the improvement of methodological tools at the global, regional and national levels by providing technical assistance, developing guidelines and modules, and establishing databases and observatories, often focusing on particular forms of violence and humanitarian settings. The Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission on Indicators on Violence against Women continued their work. At a meeting held in December 2009, they identified a set of nine core indicators for surveys on violence against women, which were presented to the Statistical Commission at its forty-second session (22 to 25 February 2011) and are based on the following: total and age-specific rate of women subjected to physical or sexual violence during their lifetime or the previous 12 months by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency; total and age-specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to sexual and/or physical violence by the current or former intimate partner during their lifetime or in the last 12 months by frequency; total and age-specific rate of women subjected to female genital mutilation or to psychological or economic violence by the intimate partner in the past 12 months.

3. Studies, research and analysis, including cost analysis

52. Studies, research and analysis relating to violence against women constitute an important knowledge base for policy and programmes development processes. Some States conducted an analysis of the economic impact of violence against women and one (United Kingdom) estimated that violence costs the country 36.7 billion pounds sterling per annum. Research and studies were conducted in numerous States, including by non-governmental organizations, often with the support of United Nations entities (Austria, Ecuador, Egypt, Gabon, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Lebanon, Mali, Mexico, Panama, Spain, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland and Togo).

53. United Nations entities support the enhancement of knowledge about violence against women through gathering information, research and studies. For example, the Secretary-General's database on violence against women provides information on measures undertaken by Member States to address such violence; as at 6 July 2012, it had received 123 responses by States. Under the UN-Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls, four new programming modules were launched providing guidance and promising practices to address violence against women through the justice, health and security sectors and campaigns.

54. A number of States emphasized the continuing challenges of lack of data on violence against women, lack of uniform data collection systems, and lack of coordination and qualified staff to collect such data (Egypt, Estonia, Gabon, Ireland, the Republic of Moldova and Tunisia). Human rights treaty bodies also expressed their concern about the lack of sex-disaggregated data on the types of violence against women and the number of victims. They urged States to undertake or improve research and data collection on prevalence, causes and consequences of violence against women.

V. United Nations efforts to achieve greater coordination, collaboration and capacity development

A. Coordination and collaboration

United Nations system-wide initiatives

55. Several key system-wide initiatives ensured continued priority within the United Nations system on the issue of violence against women and resulted in increased coordination and collaboration among United Nations entities.

1. UNiTE to End Violence against Women

56. UNiTE to End Violence against Women, launched by the Secretary-General in 2008, continued its advocacy efforts at the global, regional and national levels. As a result, there has been enhanced collaboration within the United Nations system to address violence against women under the umbrella of the Secretary-General's campaign. For example, there was a significant increase in the number of United Nations inter-agency initiatives addressing violence against women (to over 100 as indicated in the 2010 Synthesis of Resident Coordinator Annual Reports, and an increase in the number of United Nations country teams requesting support from the United Nations Trust Fund to undertake such joint initiatives under the umbrella of the campaign (to over 50). The campaign continued to engage multiple stakeholders,

including high-level officials, in all regions where it was rolled out, including through the Secretary-General's Network of Men Leaders; to organize awareness-raising activities at the national and international levels; and to develop strategic partnerships with international and regional organizations, including the African Union and the African regional economic communities.

2. Task Force on Violence against Women of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality

57. The Task Force enhanced timely information exchange, coordination and collaboration among United Nations entities, including through the inventory of United Nations system activities to prevent and eliminate violence against women. The results and lessons learned from the joint programming initiative of the Task Force, which was carried out in 10 countries, were compiled and presented at the global consultation on "Delivering as One on Violence Against Women: From Intent to Action".[11] The Task Force has been converted to the Standing Committee on Violence against Women.

3. United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

58. By the end of 2011, the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women was supporting 96 active projects valued at over $61 million, including joint programmes of 12 United Nations country teams, in 86 countries and territories, aimed at preventing violence, expanding access by survivors to services and strengthening institutional responses. Although 15 States contributed a total of $20.5 million to support the Trust Fund in 2010 and 2011, demand for support continued to greatly exceed available funds. In its 2011 call for proposals, the Trust Fund included a special focus on efforts to address violence against women in conflict, post-conflict and transitional settings. During the reporting period, an external evaluation of the Trust Fund was finalized and, based on its recommendations, a new strategy (2010-2015) was adopted and endorsed by the Trust Fund's inter-agency Programme Advisory Committee. In order to achieve more effective investments, the Trust Fund commissioned an outcome mapping report (2006 to mid-2011) to determine promising approaches to addressing violence against women.[12] The Trust Fund also strengthened the capacity of grantees to implement, monitor and evaluate programmes that address such violence.

4. United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict

59. United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict strengthened its policy frameworks and capacities and enhanced advocacy and research efforts. The 13 United Nations entities comprising this initiative endorsed a new framework aimed at strengthening the engagement of the various stakeholders and improving the monitoring and reporting of conflict-related sexual violence. United Nations Action's multi-donor trust fund supported several initiatives to address sexual violence in conflict, including the implementation of monitoring analyses and

[11] See http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2011/VAWJointProgrammingCompendium-1.pdf

[12] Available from http://www.unwomen.org/publications/mapping-of-grantees-outcomes-the-united-trust-fund-to-end-violence-against-women-2006-to-mid-2011/.

reporting arrangements in various countries, deployment of experts, training programmes and research. In order to improve the measurement of conflict-related sexual violence, United Nations Action adopted a matrix of early warning indicators. Advocacy efforts were enhanced by mobilizing social media to amplify the "Stop Rape Now" campaign. United Nations Action also works with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, who reports to the Security Council on the topic.

Coordination and collaboration at the regional and national levels

60. United Nations entities stepped up their efforts to improve collaboration and coordination in order to effectively address violence against women. For example, to improve comprehensive and coordinated responses, they joined efforts under the UNDP-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund in several countries and territories. In the area of research and data collection, the five United Nations regional commissions, in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division and UN-Women, continued to implement the interregional programme "Enhancing capacities to eradicate violence against women through networking of local knowledge communities" by producing survey modules and organizing knowledge-sharing initiatives. Another example of inter-agency collaboration in this area is the "Together for Girls" initiative of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNFPA, UN-Women and the World Health Organization (WHO), developed in partnership with the Government of the United States and private sector actors, aimed at collecting data on violence against girls in seven countries.

B. Capacity development to support national efforts

61. In order to better support initiatives to address violence against women at the national level, United Nations entities strengthened their policy frameworks, capacity and knowledge. UNHCR strengthened its operations with additional funding to address gender-based violence and launched an updated strategy on the topic. In line with an evaluation and recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), several United Nations missions developed strategies and initiatives to address violence against women, including in humanitarian settings. United Nations entities, including OHCHR and United Nations Volunteers, increased their capacity to provide advice and support in addressing violence against women by deploying specialized advisers and experts in several countries, and UNFPA enhanced its staff's substantive knowledge about the topic.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

62. **During the reporting period, States took actions to prevent and address violence against women, focusing on strengthening national legal and policy frameworks, enhancing prevention and protection measures, improving knowledge and data collection systems, and facilitating cooperation at all levels. Various forms of violence against women were increasingly criminalized and penalties were increased. Definitions of violence and the scope of protection were expanded. Measures were taken to ensure the implementation of legislation through dedicated policies and coordination among various actors,**

although limited information was provided on the decision-making power of coordination mechanisms and the allocation of resources to ensure their sustainability.

63. States increasingly complemented such laws and policies with capacity-building and prevention activities, although they were largely limited to awareness-raising initiatives and often not systematically carried out. However, there were increasing efforts in numerous countries to expand prevention activities to include educational programmes and the mobilization of multiple stakeholders, such as communities, men and boys, and the media.

64. Prevention activities, including awareness-raising, resulted in increased demand from victims/survivors for protection and services. Greater focus therefore needs to be placed on the protection of victims/survivors and the provision of services to address this need and reinforce the message that violence against women is not tolerated. Such services are limited to central locations and little information was provided on resources allocated to address the needs of particular groups of women. Limited information was also provided about the consistency of initiatives and the impact of measures and programmes, their monitoring and evaluation and the allocation of resources to ensure their sustainability.

65. Despite the increase in efforts, the prevalence of violence against women worldwide is still high. Remaining challenges include underreporting of incidents and existing barriers to access justice, protection and services; insufficient enforcement of legislation; limited allocation of adequate resources to implement laws, policies and programmes and insufficient monitoring and evaluation of their impact; lack of reliable data to monitor progress; and lack of coordination among multiple stakeholders.

66. States should adopt a comprehensive, coordinated and systematic approach based on human rights and gender equality principles and the involvement of multiple stakeholders at all levels. Strong political commitment at the national level, demonstrated by comprehensive national laws and policies and the allocation of sufficient resources is required. The implementation of all measures and the monitoring and evaluation of their impact need to be strengthened.

67. States should continue to adopt comprehensive legislation, in accordance with international human rights standards, that not only criminalizes such violence and punishes the perpetrators, but also mandates prevention and protection for victims/survivors, and mechanisms and funding to ensure implementation.

68. States should continue to take measures to encourage victims/survivors to report their cases and to ensure that all victims/survivors have access to justice, that their cases are properly investigated and that perpetrators are prosecuted. Penalties for non-compliance with the law should be in place to ensure accountability. States should ensure that women exposed to or at risk of violence are informed about their rights and remedies and that free legal aid and assistance are available throughout legal proceedings. Civil protection orders, civil lawsuits and remedies should be available to complement criminal measures and enhance the protection of victims/survivors.

69. States should continue to establish specialized police and prosecution units and ensure that they are adequately equipped. They should also ensure that training for law enforcement officials and the judiciary on violence against women is systematic, that guidelines and protocols are issued, and that criminal justice processes are gender-sensitive and protect the rights and safety of the complainants and survivors.

70. States should ensure that national action plans and policies addressing violence against women are comprehensive and multidisciplinary in scope. They should incorporate clear targets and indicators, provide for ongoing monitoring and impact assessments, and ensure coordination of action among all stakeholders. Coordination mechanisms should be strengthened with resources and have clear responsibilities to effectively implement such policies. States should ensure the allocation of sufficient resources for the implementation of their plans and policies.

71. The participation of a wide range of stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, in the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of national action plans, policies and programmes is a good practice and should be promoted.

72. States should ensure that a comprehensive and coordinated approach to the prevention of violence against women is adopted; that the prevention of such violence forms an integral part of laws, policies and programmes; and that resources are increased to monitor and evaluate the impact of such initiatives.

73. Prevention strategies and activities should address the root causes of violence, including by empowering women, strengthening their economic independence, and eliminating discrimination against them in law and in practice, in both the public and private sectors. States should ensure the engagement of communities, religious and community leaders, civil society and women's organizations, men and boys, young people and the private sector, including the media, to challenge gender stereotypes and social norms that perpetuate violence against women and ensure that environments, communities and schools are safe for women and girls. States should also ensure early interventions with families and children exposed to or at risk of violence.

74. Awareness-raising campaigns should be systematic, sustained and extended throughout all areas of the country to target the general public as well as particular groups of women. Educational institutions and curricula at all levels should promote gender equality and women's human rights and condemn violence. States should also consider extending prevention activities to sports organizations and clubs, youth organizations and special programmes in schools and to include efforts aimed at building skills in the development of respectful relations.

75. States should ensure that all victims/survivors of violence have access to immediate protection and support, including medical treatment and police interventions, social, psychological and legal assistance, and shelter. Services need to be adequately resourced and available to all victims/survivors and their children, including young, immigrant and indigenous women, women from ethnic minorities, women with disabilities and those living with HIV/AIDS, and

women from rural and remote areas. Information about the availability of existing services should be broadly disseminated.

76. **Such services should be provided in an integrated and coordinated manner in one location and should be extended throughout the country, including to rural areas. All professionals handling cases of violence against women should be systematically trained and protocols should be issued to ensure uniform quality of services provision. Coordination among different sectors needs to be further strengthened and referral mechanisms should be reinforced. States should ensure that the work of civil society actors, including community-based groups and women's organizations, in supporting victims/survivors is strengthened.**

77. **States should ensure the systematic and coordinated collection and dissemination of data, as well as its analysis, including on prevalence, frequency, causes and consequences of violence against women and on the impact of measures to address such violence. Statistical data should be disaggregated by sex, race, age, ethnicity and other relevant characteristics. States should ensure the adoption of the nine core indicators for surveys on violence against women, as identified by the Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission.**

78. **States should use available data to monitor trends and progress and inform legislative and policy reforms and the provision of targeted and effective services. The development of uniform standards of data collection and capacity-building of statisticians to collect data in a gender-sensitive manner are critical. Qualitative research should be intensified to cover the economic, political and social determinants of violence against women.**